

8-28-1984

## AFGE Speech

Geraldine Ferraro

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/vice\\_presidential\\_campaign\\_speeches\\_1984](https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/vice_presidential_campaign_speeches_1984)



Part of the [Law Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Ferraro, Geraldine, "AFGE Speech" (1984). *Speeches*. 14.  
[https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/vice\\_presidential\\_campaign\\_speeches\\_1984/14](https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/vice_presidential_campaign_speeches_1984/14)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the 1984 Vice-Presidential Campaign at FLASH: The Fordham Law Archive of Scholarship and History. It has been accepted for inclusion in Speeches by an authorized administrator of FLASH: The Fordham Law Archive of Scholarship and History. For more information, please contact [tmelnick@law.fordham.edu](mailto:tmelnick@law.fordham.edu).

FINAL DRAFT

Cleveland  
8/28/84

Ferraro  
AFGE SPEECH

THANK YOU, KEN, FOR THAT TERRIFIC WELCOME. THESE PAST FOUR YEARS HAVE BEEN TOUGH AND CHALLENGING ONES FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES -- BUT WHEN IT COMES TO TAKING ON CHALLENGES, THIS UNION HAS ONE OF THE TOUGHEST LEADERS IN AMERICA IN KEN BLAYLOCK.

I ALSO WANT TO EXTEND A SPECIAL GREETING TO YOUR EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT, JOHN STURDIVANT, WHO WORKED CLOSELY WITH ME ON THE DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM -- WHICH BY THE WAY LOOKS BETTER AND BETTER THE MORE YOU READ THE 19TH CENTURY PLATFORM THE REPUBLICANS PRODUCED IN DALLAS.

YOU COULDN'T HAVE PICKED A BETTER PLACE THAN CLEVELAND FOR THIS YEAR'S CONVENTION, BECAUSE YOU CAN'T FIND A BETTER OR STRONGER SUPPORTER OF FEDERAL WORKERS THAN CONGRESSWOMAN MARY ROSE OAKER. I'VE BEEN PROUD TO WORK SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH MARY ROSE ON BEHALF OF FAIR PLAY, FAIR BENEFITS, AND FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE OUR GOVERNMENT WORK.

AND, OF COURSE, I'M DELIGHTED TO SEE MY FRIEND AND YOURS, VIC FAZIO, WHO IS A LEADER IN CONGRESS.

AS GOVERNMENT WORKERS, YOU UNDERSTAND, PERHAPS BETTER THAN MOST, THE STARK CHOICE WE FACE IN THIS ELECTION.

IT IS A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO VISIONS OF THE FUTURE AND TWO APPROACHES TO NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

NOWHERE WAS THAT MORE VIVIDLY DEMONSTRATED THAN AT THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION LAST WEEK IN DALLAS.

FOR FOUR LONG DAYS, MR. REAGAN AND THE REPUBLICANS GAVE US SPEECH AFTER SPEECH DUCKING RESPONSIBILITY AND CASTING BLAME.

BLAME THE FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD FOR HIGH INTEREST RATES.

BLAME THE CONGRESS FOR RECORD DEFICITS.

BLAME THE POOR FOR BEING POOR AND THE HOMELESS FOR BEING ON THE STREETS.

AND WHEN YOU CAN'T THINK OF ANYONE ELSE TO BLAME, BLAME THE GOVERNMENT AND FEDERAL WORKERS.

WELL LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING. I, FOR ONE, AM SICK AND TIRED OF THE POLITICS OF BLAME.

IT ISN'T THE FEDERAL WORKER WHO SENDS UNCLE SAM AN \$1100 BILL FOR A 22 CENT PLASTIC STOOL CAP. IT'S FEDERAL WORKERS WHO HAVE FERRETED OUT THE ABUSES AND BLOWN THE WHISTLE.

IT ISN'T THE FEDERAL WORKER WHO LOBBIES THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE EPA FOR DELAYS IN TOXIC WASTE CLEAN-UP. IT'S THE FEDERAL WORKER WHO IS FIGHTING TO KEEP OUR AIR AND WATER CLEAN.

IT ISN'T THE FEDERAL WORKER WHO CREATES THE NEEDS THAT GOVERNMENT SERVES. IT'S THE FEDERAL WORKER WHO ANSWERS THOSE NEEDS -- WHO NURSES OUR VETERANS BACK TO HEALTH, MAKES SURE THE SOCIAL SECURITY CHECKS GO OUT ON TIME, KEEPS OUR MILITARY READY TO FIGHT, BATTLES THE DRUG SMUGGLERS AT OUR BORDER.

YOU DESERVE TO BE PROUD OF YOUR WORK AND YOU DESERVE POLITICAL LEADERS WHO SHARE THAT PRIDE, NOT LEADERS WHO USE YOU AS SCAPEGOATS.

AND LET'S BE CLEAR ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE IN THIS ELECTION. DESPITE THE RHETORIC OF DALLAS, THE ISSUE BEFORE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IS NOT BIG GOVERNMENT. NONE OF US BELIEVES THAT GOVERNMENT HAS THE ANSWER TO EVERY PROBLEM OR THE SOLUTION TO EVERY NEED.

THE ISSUE BEFORE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IS WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT, SERVING WHAT PURPOSE, FOR WHOSE BENEFIT.

THEIR GOVERNMENT - THE REAGAN REPUBLICANS - IS ONE THAT SEEKS TO IMPOSE A RIGID ORTHODOXY ON ALL AMERICANS. OUR GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS THAT THE GREATNESS OF AMERICA LIES IN OUR DIVERSITY, OUR PLURALISM, OUR TOLERANCE FOR THE VIEWS OF OTHERS.

THEIR GOVERNMENT CUTS TAXES FOR THE RICH AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS FOR THE POOR AND CALLS IT PROGRESS.

OURS PLAYS BY ONE SET OF RULES FOR ALL AND CALLS IT SIMPLE FAIRNESS.

THEIR MISSION IS TO DISMANTLE THE GOOD WITH THE BAD. OUR MISSION IS TO REBUILD, TO CAST ASIDE WHAT DOESN'T WORK AND DELIVER EVEN MORE EFFECTIVELY THOSE SERVICES OUR PEOPLE NEED.

THEY ATTACK WASTE AND FRAUD IN DOMESTIC PROGRAMS WITH A BULLDOZER, BUT HARDLY TURN THE SOIL ON THE MILITARY BUDGET. WE BELIEVE THAT THE DRIVE FOR EFFICIENCY DOESN'T STOP AT THE FRONT STEPS OF THE PENTAGON.

THE ISSUE IS NOT BIG GOVERNMENT OR SMALL GOVERNMENT.  
IT IS GOOD GOVERNMENT - EFFICIENT, PRODUCTIVE, COMPASSIONATE  
GOVERNMENT IN THE HANDS OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO BELIEVE PUBLIC  
SERVICE IS A HIGH CALLING.

AND THE HIGHEST DEMAND ON GOVERNMENT'S LEADERS IS TO  
LEVEL WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ABOUT THE CHALLENGES BEFORE  
OUR NATION.

WE FACE SEVERAL CHALLENGES. BUT ONE I WANT TO EMPHASIZE  
TONIGHT IS THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE. THE TWO PRINCIPAL PARTIES  
TAKE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THIS CHALLENGE.  
MR. REAGAN SAID THAT THIS ELECTION GIVES THE AMERICAN PEOPLE  
THE CLEAREST POLITICAL CHOICE IN 50 YEARS. AND ON THE CHOICE  
OF WAR AND PEACE, HE'S ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.

THIS PRESIDENT HAS NEVER SEEN AN ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT  
HE LIKED.

HE OPPOSED PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S TEST BAN TREATY.

HE OPPOSED PRESIDENT NIXON'S SALT I AND ABM TREATIES.

HE OPPOSED PRESIDENT FORD'S AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIETS  
AT VLADIVOSTOK.

HE OPPOSED PRESIDENT CARTER'S SALT II AGREEMENT.

AND NOW, AS PRESIDENT, HE HAS PRESIDED OVER THE TOTAL COLLAPSE OF ALL ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS. -

WELL I SAY THIS: IF THIS PRESIDENT CAN'T STOP EXCHANGING INSULTS AND START EXCHANGING SOLID NEGOTIATING PROPOSALS TO END THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE, THEN IT'S TIME TO EXCHANGE THIS PRESIDENT FOR ONE WHO WILL.

IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS, TENSIONS WITH RUSSIA HAVE RISEN; WE'VE SENT TROOPS TO CENTRAL AMERICA; AND OUR YOUNG MEN HAVE NEEDLESSLY DIED IN BEIRUT. THE QUESTION IS, OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY SON JOHN - AND TO YOUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN? WILL THIS PRESIDENT, UNRESTRAINED BY THE NEED FOR REELECTION, HEIGHTEN THE RISK OF WAR?

I DON'T WANT TO TAKE THAT CHANCE. I WANT A PRESIDENT WHO BELIEVES IN NEGOTIATION, NOT CONFRONTATION; WHO UNDERSTANDS THAT AN ARMS RACE DOES NOT LEAD TO PEACE - IT LEADS TO AN ARMS RACE; AND WHO STOPS INVESTING SO MUCH IN THE ARMS RACE AND STARTS INVESTING MORE IN THE HUMAN RACE.

THAT KIND OF PRESIDENT WILL STRENGTHEN AMERICA. FOR THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO STRENGTHEN THIS COUNTRY.

I BELIEVE WE STRENGTHEN AMERICA WHEN WE DON'T DIVIDE INTO HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS, WHEN WE DON'T FOCUS ON US AND THEM.

IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS, FIVE MILLION AMERICANS HAVE JOINED THE RANKS OF THE POOR. EIGHT AND A HALF MILLION AMERICANS ARE OUT OF WORK. AND ONE OUT OF FOUR SMALL CHILDREN LIVES IN POVERTY. THE RESPONSE OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION TO THIS HUMAN DISASTER HAS BEEN TO CUT FOOD STAMPS, THROW PEOPLE OFF SOCIAL SECURITY, MAKE MEDICARE RECIPIENTS PAY MORE, AND REDUCE NEARLY EVERY SINGLE PROGRAM THAT HELPS POOR MOTHERS AND INFANTS. MY QUESTION TO MR. REAGAN IS, WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE DO YOU THINK WE ARE?

I AM NOT SEEKING THE VICE-PRESIDENCY SO THAT I CAN HELP MAKE IT HARDER FOR THE HUNGRY TO EAT, THE COLD TO KEEP WARM, AND THE HOMELESS TO FIND SHELTER. I GOT INTO POLITICS IN THE FIRST PLACE SO I COULD HELP THE DISADVANTAGED - NOT HARM THEM. AND THE BEST WAY YOU AND I CAN HELP THEM IN 1984 IS TO DEFEAT RONALD REAGAN AND ELECT WALTER MONDALE.

WHEN WE TREAT EACH OTHER RIGHT, WE ARE A STRONGER, BETTER COUNTRY. THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO SERVE THIS COUNTRY, AND BEING DECENT TO EACH OTHER IS ONE.

IN DALLAS LAST WEEK THE REPUBLICANS SPENT A LONG TIME TALKING ABOUT PATRIOTISM. BUT I DON'T THINK PEOPLE BUY A SELF-CONSCIOUS PATRIOTISM MADE ON MADISON AVENUE. THEY FEEL THE SELFLESS PATRIOTISM OF MAIN STREET AMERICA.



WHEN WE FIND JOBS FOR THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE STILL  
UNEMPLOYED IN OHIO - THAT WILL BE A PATRIOTIC ACT.

WHEN WE PROVIDE TEACHERS WITH THE TOOLS THEY NEED  
TO EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN - THAT WILL BE A PATRIOTIC ACT.

WHEN WE STOP SELLING OUR NATURAL HERITAGE TO THE  
HIGHEST BIDDER - THAT WILL BE A PATRIOTIC ACT.

WHEN WE FULLY ENFORCE OUR CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS AND  
MAKE THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT A PART OF THE U.S.  
CONSTITUTION - THAT WILL BE A PATRIOTIC ACT.

MR. REAGAN PREACHES LOVE OF COUNTRY, AND I AGREE.  
BUT I SAY LET'S LOVE OUR COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN TOO. LET'S  
HELP FARMERS, THE UNEMPLOYED, THE YOUNG, AND THE OLD.  
LET'S PUT PEOPLE TO WORK AND KEEP THE PEACE. THAT'S THE  
BEST WAY TO HONOR THE AMERICAN FLAG.

THIS IS THE DIRECTION THAT POINTS TO A STRONGER  
FUTURE. AND THE TIME TO BEGIN THAT JOURNEY IS NOT LATER.  
IT'S NOW.

THE TIME HAS COME TO ELECT A PRESIDENT WHO WILL  
ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF HIS OFFICE, NOT JUST THE  
TRAPPINGS.

THE TIME HAS COME TO ELECT A PRESIDENT WHO WILL  
ROLL UP HIS SLEEVES AND TACKLE THE CHALLENGES WE FACE,  
NOT ROLL DOWN HIS JODPURS AND RIDE OFF INTO THE SUNSET.

THE TIME HAS COME TO SEND RONALD REAGAN BACK TO  
CALIFORNIA AND PUT FRITZ MONDALE IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

TOGETHER, WE CAN CHANGE AMERICA'S DIRECTION.

TOGETHER, WE CAN RESTORE AMERICA'S FAITH IN THEIR  
GOVERNMENT.

TOGETHER, WE CAN SEIZE THE FUTURE AND MAKE IT OURS.